



Collective Energy Actions

Widening the support for participation of EU citizens in community and collective energy actions

DECIDE is a Horizon 2020 project on existing and emerging energy communities and other collective initiatives. Based on the research in the past two years, DECIDE can conclude that **Collective Energy Actions (CEAs)** as a broader approach compared to **Renewable and Citizen Energy Communities (RECs and CECs)** will play a pivotal role in accelerating the inclusive energy transition progresses and uptake of clean energy technologies.

This conclusion stems from the fact that CEAs as the broader approach demonstrated to engage a more diverse audience in the process of energy saving, renewable energy investments, and other energy actions. CEAs further showed more viable business cases ¹ compared to RECs and CECs, and therefore seems suitable to engage citizens who cannot easily be recruited by RECs and CECs.

We define Collective Energy Actions as any energy action that **depends on the collective involvement of energy consumers/prosumers**. RECs and CECs are, in this sense, a more restrictive subgroup of Collective Energy Actions. The table below indicates the main differences between REC/CEC and CEAs.




	RECs/CECs	CEAs
Primary purpose	Provide environmental, economic or social community benefits, rather than financial profits	Provide at least economic and environmental benefits, which does not exclude generating financial profits
Governance	Effectively controlled by shareholders or members	Effectively controlled by members or shareholders or by a third party (e.g., SME, energy supplier, municipality, etc.) . If the collective action is controlled by a private undertaking whose primary commercial or professional activity is in the energy sector, the coordination of the collective action must include a decision majority of representatives from a public body, citizens, and/or civil society.
Open participation	Open and voluntary participation	Participation is voluntary. It can be open, or membership based.

¹ Structured overview of existing and emerging business models, related contractual agreements and recommendations ([link](#))

Aside from energy communities (RECs and CECs), CEAs are currently hardly included in Horizon Europe and other EU support programmes, and consequently receive less attention at EU, national, and regional scales.

DECIDE calls for an active inclusion of CEAs in the diverse programmes, enabling its further maturing and EU-wide uptake and replication.

Key considerations for the recognition and wider uptake of the Collective Energy Actions concept:

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Recognising the existence of the Collective Energy Actions in the EU research and policy
 EU research should enable more diverse implementation of community involvement across the EU, which integrates existing and emerging initiatives, including energy communities but not focusing on them exclusively.
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Unlocking funding and support for research projects and policy analysis to focus on a wider scope of the initiatives in the energy sector
 EU research should inform the EU policy-makers on what is the current status quo in the energy sector. While a lot of funding and support has been already provided to the energy communities, knowledge about other types of CEAs is still lacking, even though they represent a vast majority of the initiatives².
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Map out existing collective energy initiatives across EU
 Mapping out the existing and emerging initiatives, not only focusing on CEC and REC, can help provide assessment on the impact of these broader initiatives (Collective Energy Actions) on the ongoing energy transition.

² Based on 40 community energy initiatives from 12 Member States involved in DECIDE

How collective energy actions could help accelerate the green transition

REPowerEU Plan, in addition to the European Green Deal with Fit for 55, calls for accelerated implementation of energy savings and efficiency measures and increased use of renewable energy sources. In order to achieve ambitious but necessary targets defined by them, citizen empowerment and involvement of citizens and local stakeholders is essential.

The Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EC) and Electricity Market Directive (2019/944/EC) introduce the concepts of Renewable Energy Community (RECs) and Citizen Energy Community (CECs), respectively. RECs and CECs are defined to address the above, but also to assure that citizens and local stakeholders have more options to actively participate in the energy sector through initiatives that they effectively control and that prioritise their environmental, economic and social benefits over financial profits.

Recognising the existence of the Collective Energy Actions will:

- ✓ Provide financial benefits from CEAs and thus motivate a higher involvement of civil sector in the energy transition and energy markets;
- ✓ Accelerate decision making through chosen committee/representatives;
- ✓ Accelerate involvement in emerging energy services and practices for testing and implementation (including collective self-consumption as one of the collective activities);
- ✓ Accelerate investments in clean energy and thus implementation of the energy transition with local added values;
- ✓ Help achieve energy system resilience through decentralized energy provision; and
- ✓ Provide a role for energy sector actors to channel their know-how and help enable energy services.

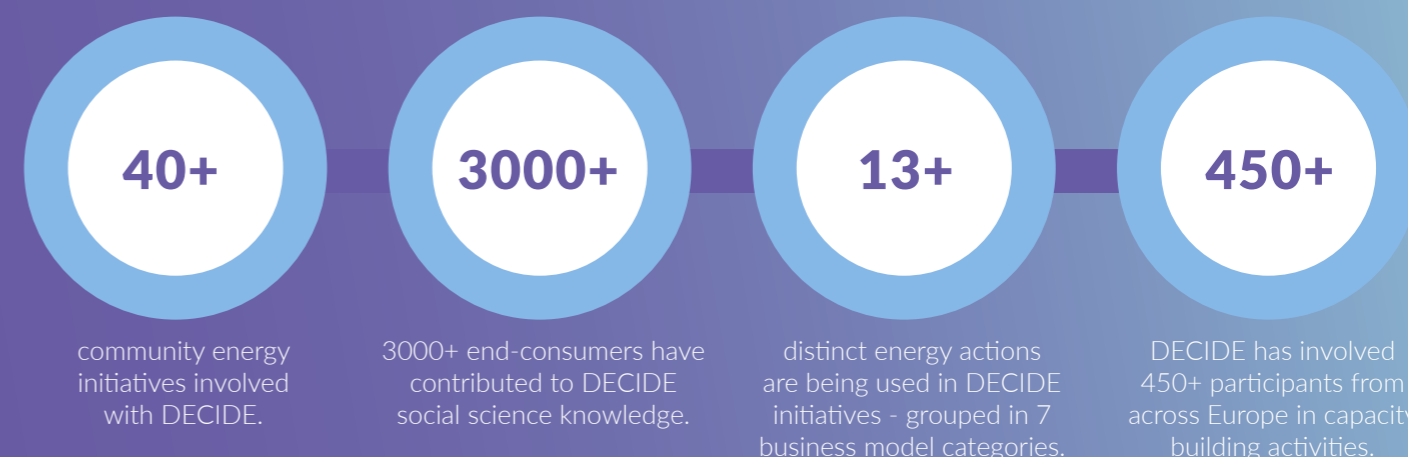
What is the main barrier for the development of the collective energy actions

Most Collective Energy Actions (CEAs) are omitted by EU funding and policy, making it more difficult for those that are already involved in such activities to be informed on how they and their initiatives can support the energy transition.

Our research shows that the number of initiatives that could be classified under Collective Energy Actions outnumber both RECs and CECs. For example, out of more than 40 community energy initiatives from 12 Member States only one could fall under the definition of a REC. At the same time, we see that the EU's agenda focuses strongly on RECs and CECs, an important but rather small part of the energy sector. The EU Solar Energy Strategy mentions that the EU and Member States should focus on "setting up at least one renewables-based energy community in every municipality above 10000 inhabitants", "ensuring that energy poor and vulnerable consumers have access to solar energy through energy communities", even though the latter might not necessarily be the only way to the energy market decentralisation and green transition.

DECIDE project

Since its start in June 2020 DECIDE has engaged existing and emerging energy communities and other collective energy actions in order to understand, identify and disseminate tools and strategies to enable replication and roll-out of energy communities and collective actions across Europe. DECIDE has become leading in gathering and transferring expertise interacting with more than 15 European projects.



Within the project, 7 pilot initiatives have been engaged directly, 14 DECIDER initiatives (pilots' collaborators) and over 20 follower initiatives from Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Czechia, Portugal and Spain. While few of those initiatives might, in the future, be recognized as RECs or CECs, currently not a single one fits under these definitions. Therefore, we classify them as Collective Energy Actions.

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